



WisDOT/Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association Meeting
Tuesday, June 15, 2004, 3:00pm

People in attendance

Sandy Beaupre, WisDOT BOP

Casey Newman, WisDOT BOP

Doug Dalton, WisDOT, BOP

WTBA Executive Board (approximately 15 individuals)

1. Overview of WisDOT's meeting purpose and WisDOT's long-range plan, *Connections 2030*, by WisDOT staff: The meeting began at 3:00. Sandy Beaupre, WisDOT, gave an overview of WisDOT's long-range plan *Connections 2030*. WisDOT is seeking input on transportation planning issues from statewide groups and larger Wisconsin cities at this point. *Connections 2030* is scheduled to be completed in 2006.
2. Gathering of input from WTBA: Discussion focused on the following issues:
 - How will land use be addressed in the plan, will there be some type of performance measure tied to land use (supported that idea)
 - There were several questions about MPOs (Metropolitan Planning Organizations) – how they are structured, what's their responsibility, and how we are working with them
 - Will WisDOT incorporate SEWRPC's SE Freeway System Plan into *Connections 2030* (WTBA feels we should)
 - Several Board members suggested WisDOT meet with shippers are part of this process and also the local chambers of commerce of the larger cities (they may present the economic perspective of the region as opposed to just the central city).
 - Will the plan include maps that reflect the current and future congestion levels? Will it include information on what travelers will have to "live with" if all the congestion needs cannot be met? That information is needed in order to make educated decisions
 - There was a desire to use some method to identify the "value added" by the addition of another modal alternative (such as intercity rail)
 - Will the plan identify new corridors (such as the North Mendota Parkway)?
 - A Board member asked for some clarification on the types of performance measures that would be used and encouraged WisDOT to use cost/benefit and value analysis where possible (there was concern that we would not use cost/benefit or value analysis enough in our process). There was also a desire for WisDOT to use factors that showed the reliability of the system (time savings, etc.), the cost of congestion and the time used to plan to avoid congestion (TTI example)
 - It was suggested that our website incorporate an email alert component that could be sent out when new or important information became available.

- A Board member noted that it is becoming more and more difficult to move heavy machinery around SE Wisconsin due to travel restrictions and congestion – this impacts his ability to complete jobs and could play a role in where the equipment is registered and kept.
- Several questions regarding funding were asked – there's a desire to include a discussion of the long-term impacts of new technologies on future funding for transportation.
- Several Board members believed the transportation sector is doing a poor job in showing the taxpayer what they are buying with their transportation funds – if the general public had a better grasp of how the dollars are used they may be more willing to pay more for their system.

Board President Chris Cape stated that WTBA would submit a policy paper outlining the association's positions to WisDOT shortly.

Connections 2030

Issues Identified by the WI Transportation Builders Assn.

June 15, 2004

State Highway Planning Issues:

- Performance standards need to be established based on the Highway's Functional Classification and whether it is urban, urbanizing, or rural. Three distinct set of standards.
- The highest performance standards should be set on the Corridors 2020 / NHS Systems.
- Performance standards should not be manipulated to hide needs. (Happened in 1997 Highway Plan) Performance standards should be at least as tight as in the STH Plan of 1997.
- Explicit Performance standards should be set for Pavements, Bridges, Mobility/Congestion, and Safety.
- Travel reliability should also be a critical performance measure.
- The economic development value of increased reliability and predictability resulting from adequate capacity should be highlighted. Uncertainty of travel times requires travelers (personal, business, and commercial) to build in extra time to accommodate delays. (See Texas Transportation Institute analysis).
- The Plan should re-examine forecasted increases in travel assumed in the State Highway Plan. The 1.5% growth rate through 2020 assumed then seems very unrealistic, given long-term historic trends. Given that we live in a world of Just-in-Time manufacturing, record low vehicle occupancy levels, immigration, and state and national trends showing a growing preference for personal vehicles, a dramatic cut in projected VMT would be a sharp divergence from historic trends.
- Needs projections for all 4 performance standards should be clearly identified and based on up-to-date travel models, including realistic auto and truck VMT, and incorporate a goal of gradually meeting and maintaining the performance standards.
- Projections of current emerging congestion by decade should be made: Current; current less enumerated projects; 2010's; 2020's. Congested highways should be identified. Comparison maps should portray congestion, assuming the Plan's intercity and commuter rail/bus initiatives are implemented.

- Safety improvements reduce accidents and fatalities, especially on 2-lane rural roads. The 1997 Plan included minimal improvements to unsafe roads. Given the growth in accidents and fatalities, a higher priority should be placed on safety improvements.
- Corridors of the Future should be identified. Inclusions might be:
 - STH 26, Oshkosh to Janesville, bypassing Fox Valley around the congested Madison urbanized area.
 - STH 16 from Oconomowoc to I90/94 at Portage, moving through traffic from SE WI destined for Minnesota and west around the Madison urbanized area.
 - A Madison North Beltline.
 - Completion of the 4-laning of US 12, from Lake Geneva to Madison, providing a much more direct through route from Madison to the growing northern Illinois suburbs.
 - A 4-lane Highway 21 from Oshkosh to I-90, providing a direct link from the Fox Valley to I-90 West.
 - A 4-lane Highway 23 connecting the Fox Valley to WI Dells.
 - Completion of the STH 164 / Racine County K Loop around Milwaukee, as envisioned in the final Metro 2020 report and in the 1995 Congressional designation of Wisconsin's NHS routes.
- The Plan should incorporate SEWRPC's formally adopted Freeway Reconstruction Plan.
- The trade-off between improving pavement and bridge performance vs. routine maintenance needs to be calculated and identified.
- The Plan should incorporate the cost of bicycle/pedestrian accommodations during reconstruction, on bridges, on urban streets, along rural shoulders, and within expanded rural corridors. (See Highway 23)
- The cost of rural (wildflowers, landscaping, structural techniques) and urban amenities (structural and pavement enhancements, freeway lids, berming) should be incorporated in cost projections.

Local Roads Planning Issues:

- Consensus performance standards should be developed for pavements, bridges, congestion (where applicable), and safety. These standards should vary by the functional classification, heavy vehicle use, and ADT of the road.

- The Local Roads Data Base should evaluate roads based on these performance standards.
- State assistance should be focused on projects (rather than general aids) that leverage local funds and help local governments meet performance standards on their systems.
- A tracking mechanism should be developed to ensure that additional state investment in local roads results in increased transportation performance.
- State assistance should be prioritized on routes with the highest functional classification.
- The Plan should assess the adequacy of local road connections to industrial parks and business centers. If necessary, a new categorical program should be created to address these needs.

Multi-Modal Trade-offs:

- The reality that freight rail will not likely cut into projected trucking growth needs to be made clear, despite the projected growth of intermodal, since those terminals will be almost entirely in Minnesota and Illinois.
- The impact of Intercity High-Speed rail and commuter rail options on projected highway VMT should be modeled, and reflected in 25-year VMT projections on parallel highway routes through a series of before / after charts, that show how much the VMT growth curve is flattened.
- The Plan should establish clear performance standards for public transit and passenger rail systems, and set minimum farebox shares to retain eligibility to receive state operating assistance.
- The Plan should conduct a cost-benefit analysis on all proposed investments in non-highway modes.
- The Plan should acknowledge the reality of the past two decades, during which the single-occupancy vehicle is the only commuting mode to gain market share despite aggressive efforts to promote alternative modes.

Implementation Issues:

- At least 4 Plan alternatives should be developed. With only 3, the two extremes are readily eliminated, and the middle course predictably selected. Four alternatives encourages mix and match recommendations.
- The Plan should show improvements recommended in several time blocks, with the most detail in the initial block, covering 10-12 years. The public and transportation

stakeholders will focus on what the Department wants to do in the near-term, not 25 years out.

- Whenever a new item is placed on the Connections 2030 website, a note with a link should be e-mailed to the stakeholders list.
- Stakeholders have been disappointed that many commitments in Translinks 21 and the follow-up State Highway Plan have not been implemented (Examples: All-Season Highways, Wisconsin Country Roads, Improved Interchanges). The final plan should include a specific implementation element.

Funding Issues:

- The Plan should acknowledge that current transportation funding levels in Wisconsin are not even adequate to address current and backlogged needs for state highways, local roads and other modes – much less future initiatives. Without new resources, Wisconsin faces state and local road system deterioration, more accidents and fatalities, more congestion, and decreasing reliability for commercial and personal travel. The Plan must once again emphasize the narrow funding base for transportation in Wisconsin and provide a thorough discussion of how other states are financing improvements.
- The process should show what funding gap exists for each alternative.
- Costs need to be shown in annual constant dollars, compared to current spending. A high 25-year cumulative plan cost unfairly skews public opinion against implementation, whereas modest incremental program growth is the way most people budget. Example: the monthly cost of a mortgage is understandable, say, compared to rent, but the cumulative cost of a 30-year mortgage only scares off home buyers.
- The plan should not recommend a specific funding strategy, but show the state and local funding options being used in other states to address transportation needs. Any mention of a base fuel tax increase should be avoided.